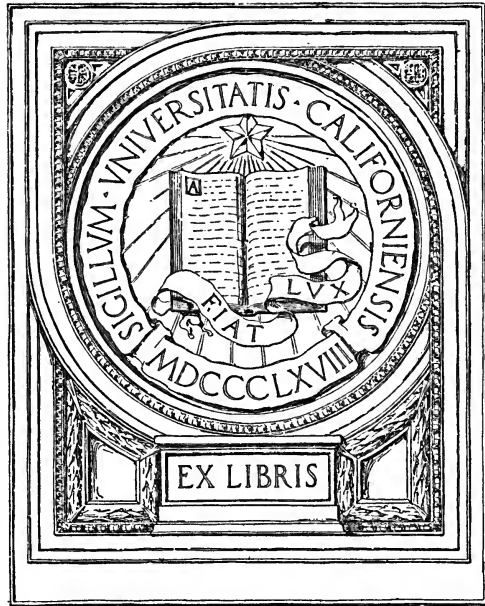


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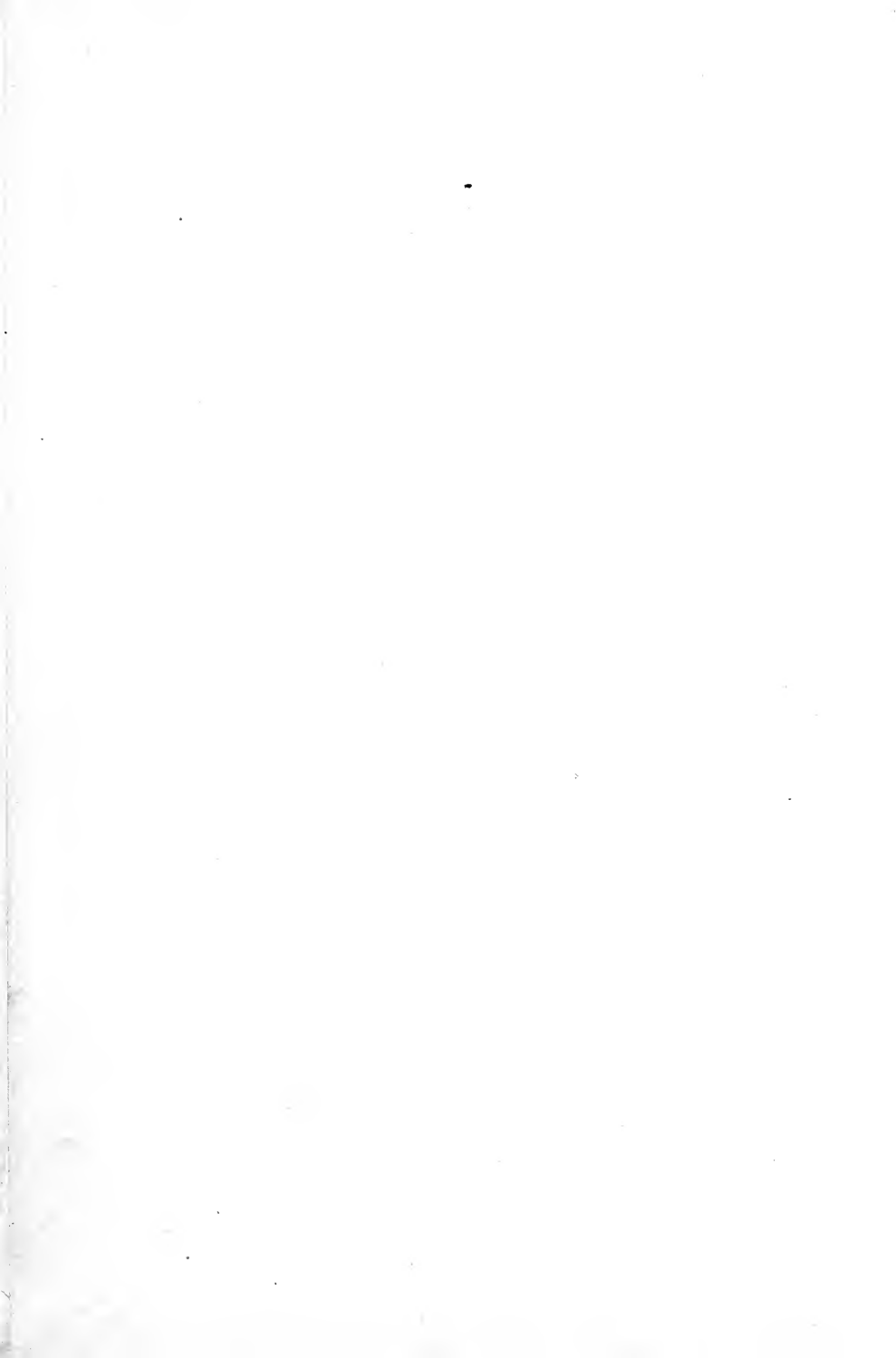
ARTHUR

IN SHADOW & SUNSHINE



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ARTHUR IN SHADOW AND SUNSHINE

BY
KATE COPE WEBB

ILLUSTRATIONS AND DECORATION
BY
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To my Granddaughter
MARTHA STERLING WEBB

TAYLOR COL. AUG. 1940



ARTHUR IN SHADOW AND SUNSHINE

CHAPTER I

“Oh, dear! I wish I could go some place. Frank says I am an awful baby to never go outside our grounds. Papa and mama won’t let me without old Betty or somebody tags along. Frank says if he was me, he’d just go everywhere, and see lots of things. I’ll never be a man at all if I stay here all the time, Frank says.”

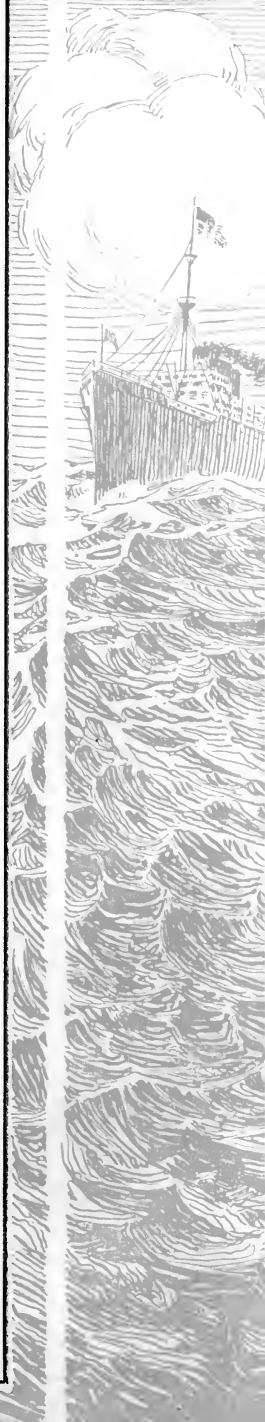
Arthur so longed for companionship that he finally decided to venture along the road a short distance by himself. He had been trying to play circus alone, and had on a little spangled jacket and cap that his sister, Lillian, had made for him. Being afraid that he might meet some one who would recognize him and laugh at his costume, he ran back to change them; he removed his cap, replacing it with one of fur, but kept on his spangled jacket, slipping over it a coarse coat that had been given him by the gardener’s wife. These garments were much too large for him, but by turning up the sleeves of the coat, and but-


toning it well over his chest, his toilet was completed to his satisfaction. He certainly looked very much like a poor little tramp in his cast-off clothing. There was little fear of being recognized, especially as he drew his cap well down over his eyes.

As he started off up the road, he decided to play, as he often did with Frank, that he was a circus boy, without father or mother or any one belonging to him. He played that he had been stolen by a circus man, who treated him very cruelly, and he was now running away. He called himself "Charley Maylard," the name of a minstrel he had lately seen and greatly admired.

Arthur strolled along the road for some distance, at last coming to a point from which he could see the railroad depot, a place always full of interest to him. He concluded to go on far enough to watch the cars as they passed.

A train came puffing up just as he reached the platform. It suddenly occurred to Arthur that it would be a fine thing to go to the city and meet his papa. He knew where his father's office was, and hoped he would call him a real brave boy to have come all the way by himself.





Without further consideration he jumped on board. Almost immediately the train was in motion. There were plenty of seats to be had. He slipped into one near the door. He began to feel frightened, and would gladly have returned home had it been possible.

Remembering that Frank would certainly have called him a coward, he tried to dismiss his fears. He continued his play of being "Charley Maylard," a circus boy, who was making his escape from a cruel master.

A boy came through the car with a basket on his arm, selling candy, oranges, nuts and other edibles. Arthur eyed them wistfully. His mother frequently had bought things for him from this very boy. "Oh how good that candy would taste!" He had no money with him, but he knew the boy would be returning through the car very soon, and wondered if he had not something with which he could make a trade for some candy. He spread out before him on the seat all his precious possessions. It was hard to decide what would be a fair exchange; there was the big jack-knife, a most marvelous affair. It had a corkscrew, a nut-picker and other queer contrivances, none of them very good for


use. But it was the pride of Arthur's heart and for it he had traded to Frank three tops, a two-dollar pearl-handled knife and fifty cents to boot. Not even for the much-wished-for candy could he part with this treasure.

He turned his attention to the other articles—tops, marbles—six pure agates; a round tin with holes in it; a piece of comb; pencils, without points; chalk—red, blue, green and white; some shells; a piece of smoked glass; a burning-glass and a small mirror; even more articles. Arthur could not decide with which of these to part. The boy passed and opportunity was gone.

The train moved along rapidly and, after stopping at several stations, reached its destination. As Arthur stood on the platform, looking about him, he did not feel quite so certain that he could find his father's office. He went to the corner of the street, and saw people hurrying by—wagons, street cars and vehicles of all kinds going in all directions. He felt bewildered, and wished that he had stayed at home.

He knew that his father's office was on California Street, near Montgomery. But where was California Street? Where, Montgomery?





He thought he might venture to ask information of a man who stood near: "Mister, please tell me where Montgomery is?"

The man was a rough-looking fellow, but answered civilly enough:

"Montgomery Street, youngster? It's no whar's near here."

"But I must go there," said Arthur. "I want to find my father's office."

"Your father's office, eh?" The man laughed. "I guess he's more like to sweep out somebody else's office. You're a pretty-looking kid to have a father with a office." He took the child roughly by the chin.

The boy shook himself free, saying proudly:

"My father would not sweep out anybody's office. He is Mr. Eldridge."

"Say that agin, youngster," said the man sharply, stepping a little nearer.

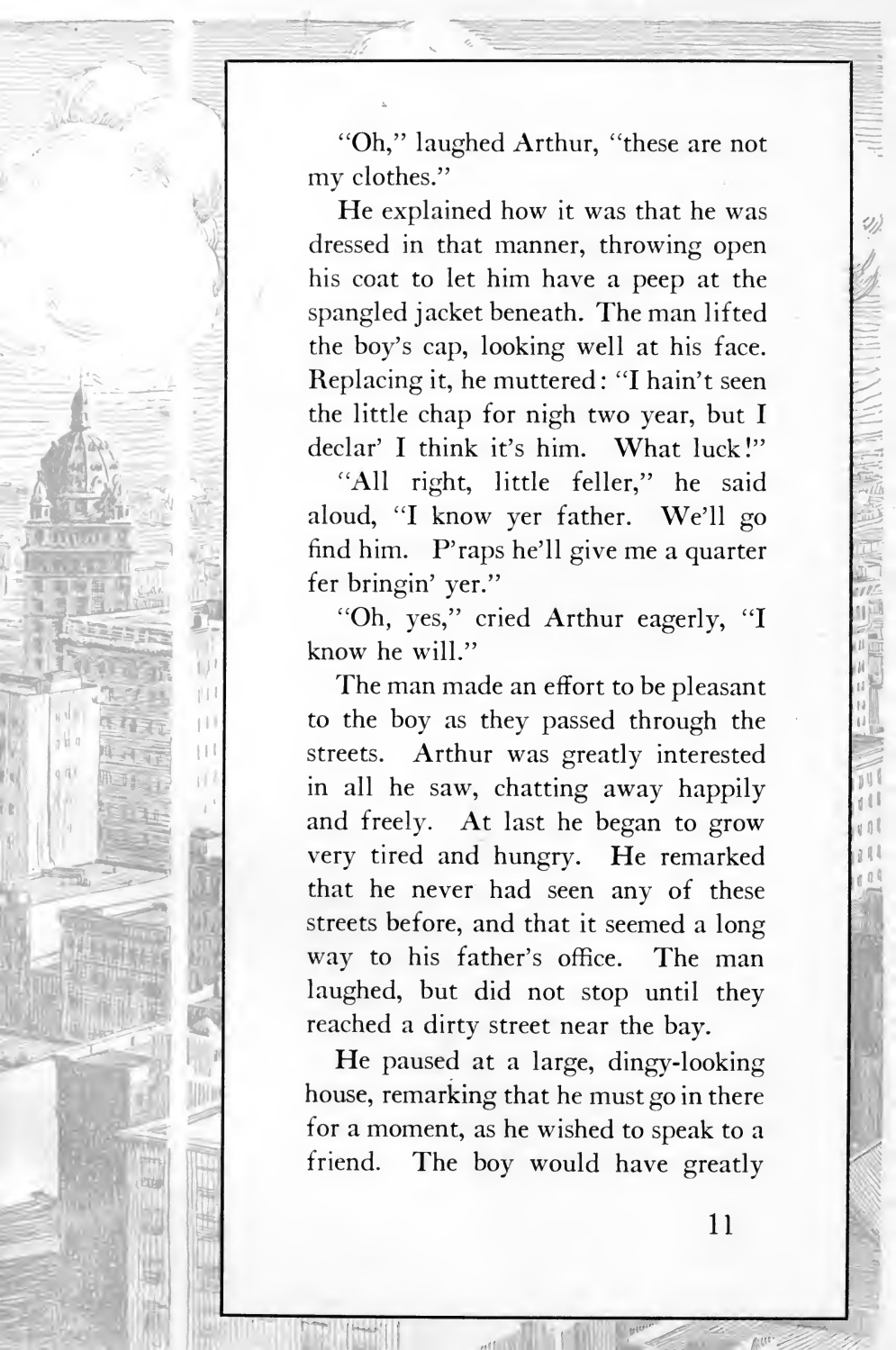
"My father is Mr. Eldridge. He lives in San Mateo." The man stared at him for a moment.

"So you're Mr. Eldridge's son, of San Mateo, eh? Well, I happen to know somethin' o' that family. They must 'a come down a peg or two when they'd let their son go dressed like this." He touched Arthur's rough coat.



He remarked
that he
never had seen
any of these
streets before





“Oh,” laughed Arthur, “these are not my clothes.”

He explained how it was that he was dressed in that manner, throwing open his coat to let him have a peep at the spangled jacket beneath. The man lifted the boy’s cap, looking well at his face. Replacing it, he muttered: “I hain’t seen the little chap for nigh two year, but I declar’ I think it’s him. What luck!”

“All right, little feller,” he said aloud, “I know yer father. We’ll go find him. P’raps he’ll give me a quarter fer bringin’ yer.”

“Oh, yes,” cried Arthur eagerly, “I know he will.”

The man made an effort to be pleasant to the boy as they passed through the streets. Arthur was greatly interested in all he saw, chatting away happily and freely. At last he began to grow very tired and hungry. He remarked that he never had seen any of these streets before, and that it seemed a long way to his father’s office. The man laughed, but did not stop until they reached a dirty street near the bay.

He paused at a large, dingy-looking house, remarking that he must go in there for a moment, as he wished to speak to a friend. The boy would have greatly

preferred not going into this miserable-looking building, but was afraid to refuse to do so. There was something in the man's manner that rather frightened him.


They went up several flights of stairs. Inside, as out, the house presented a wretched appearance, seeming to be a kind of low lodging-house. Arthur saw a number of people passing up and down the stairway. He did not like their looks, but somehow felt glad that he was not altogether alone with this man.

By this time Arthur began to realize that he had done very wrong in coming away from his home at all. He was so tired and hungry that he scarcely could keep the tears back.

They went to the very top of the house, stopping before a door near the stairway. The man unlocked the door, leading the boy into a large, poorly furnished room; on a table were the remains of a meal. Arthur felt so very hungry that he thought he could eat even that coarse food. He was thirsty, too; seeing a pitcher on the table, he said timidly, "May I have a drink, please?"

"Certain, my young gent," pouring out a cupful. Arthur took it, but the smell was enough. He could not bring





himself to taste the muddy-looking mixture.

“This isn’t water. It’s beer, isn’t it? Please let me have some water.”

“Certain, you can have it. Mighty poor taste in my opinion.”

The man laughed, took the cup, tossed the beer into the pitcher again and going to the side of the room drew some water. Arthur drank it, although it was strongly flavored with beer.

“If yer hungry, thar’s some bread and meat,” the man said, pointing to the table. The boy did not feel hungry now; the food would have choked him if he had attempted to swallow it.

“Won’t you please take me to my father?” he asked. The man answered with a grin that terrified him:


“Guess I’ll wait awhile. I’m tired,” he said, throwing himself at full length on the bed, pretending to go to sleep.

Arthur was now thoroughly alarmed; the tears kept coming into his eyes, feeling that not much longer could he restrain them. He wondered what they were doing at home, and if they had missed him. If the man would only awaken and take him to his father’s office, he knew his papa would give him more than a quarter. Just then the man



Before he could escape
a heavy hand
was laid upon him





moved slightly. Arthur ran to him, the tears coursing down his cheeks:

“Oh, please, *please* won’t you take me to my papa? I can’t stay here any longer. They’ll think I’m lost. Won’t you take me?”

The man caught the boy roughly by the arm, frightening him so that he stopped crying.

“Now you! Don’t you go makin’ such a racket, or I’ll give you somethin’ to stop it mighty quick.”

Arthur was still for a moment. Speaking more quietly, trying to suppress his sobs, he said:

“When will you take me away from here? My father’ll give you just lots of money. I know he will. I won’t tell you frightened me. ’Pon honor, I won’t.”

“Yer’re right, small chap. I think yer father’ll give me some money, and I mean it to be a big lot.”

“Oh, yes, I know he will. Now do let us go.”

The man lay down again, saying:

“Not just yet, young shaver.”

Arthur knew by the tone of his voice that there was no use urging him any more. He tried so hard to be brave, but now was almost frantic. He was cry-

ing bitterly, although managing not to make a great deal of noise.

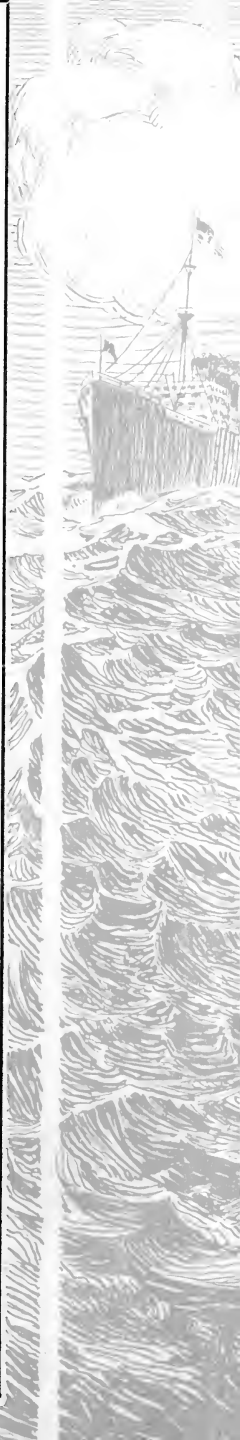
It was getting dark in the room; Arthur heard a key grate in the door; it opened, and a low, heavy-set man came in. Seeing the door open and hoping that his cruel jailer was asleep, he made a spring, reaching the landing. Before he could escape, a heavy hand was laid upon him, and he was quickly jerked back into the room.


CHAPTER II

“None o’ that. You young scamp!” striking the child a cruel blow.

Arthur was in despair. He threw himself against the door, kicking, pounding it, and screaming with all his strength. He was quickly pulled away, the new man helping, although not in the least comprehending why the boy was there. One of them put his hand over his mouth, while the other lit a candle.

“Here you, Jim, get me a rope. I’ll soon fix him.” He threw him on a cot, and securely bound him to it. He resisted with all his strength—kicked, scratched, and, getting an opportunity, bit the man’s hand. His struggles were





of no avail. Soon he lay still, bound, almost unable to breathe because of the bandage tied over his mouth.

“Why don’t yer give him some o’ that black stuff? That’d keep him quiet enough.”

Jim told the man, whom he called Nat, to bring the bottle. He poured some of this dark-looking liquid into a teaspoon, seeming rather particular as to the quantity. This they forced Arthur to swallow, he being so very wretched that he scarcely knew what they were doing with him.

“Guess that’ll fix him all right. Spunky little rat, isn’t he?”

It was not long before the drug began to take effect, and Arthur sank into a heavy sleep.

Jim told Nat that Arthur’s father was a very rich man. He hoped to make a large sum of money by concealing his son. At one time he had worked on his father’s place, often had seen the child.

On the day of Arthur’s disappearance his mother and sisters, Lillian and Emma, had gone to San Francisco for the day, he being left in charge of Betty, his former nurse. He considered himself much too old for a nurse’s care, but

he was her particular charge, she being most devoted to him.

The afternoon of his leaving home, Betty saw him playing around the grounds. After awhile, not seeing or hearing him, she went to find him, but not doing so readily, she inquired of the other servants. Soon she became very much alarmed. The place was searched thoroughly. They went up the road he had traveled such a short time before, and made inquiries at the depot, but no one could be found who had seen him that day.

Mr. Eldridge, his wife and daughters, alighted from the train, laughing and chatting together. Betty was there, scarcely able to drag herself forward to tell what she must.

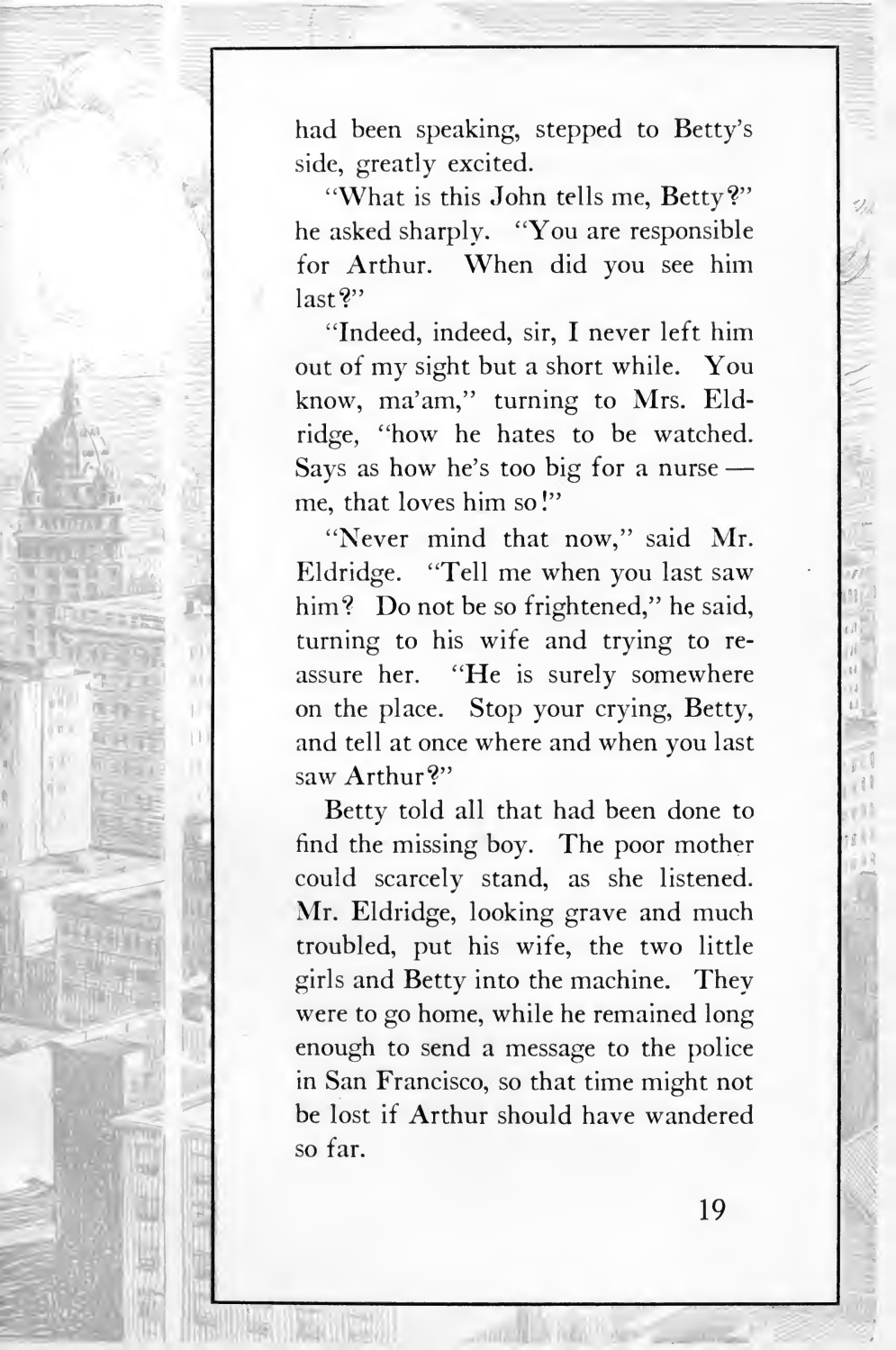
Emma's sharp eyes saw her first. "Why, mama, there's Betty! Where's Arthur?"

Mrs. Eldridge, on catching a glimpse of Betty's face, knew that something was very wrong.

"Betty!" she exclaimed. "Arthur! Is anything wrong with Arthur?"

Betty burst into tears: "O ma'am, O ma'am! We just can't find him at all."

Mr. Eldridge, to whom the chauffeur



had been speaking, stepped to Betty's side, greatly excited.

"What is this John tells me, Betty?" he asked sharply. "You are responsible for Arthur. When did you see him last?"

"Indeed, indeed, sir, I never left him out of my sight but a short while. You know, ma'am," turning to Mrs. Eldridge, "how he hates to be watched. Says as how he's too big for a nurse — me, that loves him so!"

"Never mind that now," said Mr. Eldridge. "Tell me when you last saw him? Do not be so frightened," he said, turning to his wife and trying to reassure her. "He is surely somewhere on the place. Stop your crying, Betty, and tell at once where and when you last saw Arthur?"

Betty told all that had been done to find the missing boy. The poor mother could scarcely stand, as she listened. Mr. Eldridge, looking grave and much troubled, put his wife, the two little girls and Betty into the machine. They were to go home, while he remained long enough to send a message to the police in San Francisco, so that time might not be lost if Arthur should have wandered so far.

The house and entire premises were searched again and again. Messengers were sent in every direction, and person after person interviewed for miles around. The poor mother shed not a tear, but set herself steadfastly to find her boy. She went to the neighbors' houses, questioning their children with whom Arthur sometimes played.


It was all in vain. There crept into the mother's face a hopeless look, as she passed from place to place, calling, at first aloud, then in a whisper: "Arthur! Arthur!"

In the middle of the night, Mr. Eldridge started to San Francisco to hasten the search that was already being made there. Mrs. Eldridge remained at home, feeling that her boy must be found here where she had seen him last.

CHAPTER III

When Arthur awoke from his deep sleep it was broad daylight. At first he could remember nothing of what had happened to him. After awhile it all seemed more like a dream than reality. He felt very wretched, his head so heavy, his face burning hot. He wanted a drink of water, but there seemed to





be no one in the room to get it for him. He thought of his mother, wishing she were here; even old Betty, whom he often deemed a nuisance. He wondered in a vague way what they all were doing at home. Why did not his papa come and find him? He tried to rise from the cot, but found himself still bound down.

The door opened, and the man, Nat, came in, carrying a small pitcher. Putting it down, he went at once to Arthur. He examined him carefully, muttering to himself: "Guess the kid won't give much more trouble now."

Arthur opened his eyes. He had fallen into a kind of stupor. On seeing the man, he said faintly: "Water, please some water."

Nat untied the rope, remarking he guessed they might get along without that. He gave Arthur a drink. Nat seemed somewhat alarmed at his condition and lifted him, changing his position. In a clumsy manner, he tried to make him more comfortable. The boy lay like a log, taking no notice of his surroundings.

The man poured some milk from the pitcher, putting it to Arthur's lips. He drank some and it seemed to do him


good. Very soon he sank into a more natural sleep.

When next Arthur awoke it was again night. There was a candle burning on the table. The two men sat talking very earnestly. Arthur knew they were talking of him. He heard them say something about money; that they must get him away that very night. They spoke of the police hunting everywhere, although Arthur could not comprehend what for. All this time Nat and Jim were drinking freely.

Now it was a very strange thing, but the boy did not seem to know that he was Arthur Eldridge. He had not the slightest recollection of his home, parents, or of anything connected with his past life. He now believed himself to be "Charley Maylard," the circus boy, the game he had played on the train. He thought his father and mother were dead, and that he had been taken by a cruel circus man. Now he was trying to run away.

The men were busily talking. Arthur, seeing the key in the door, hoped he might escape without being seen. The fever in his veins gave him strength for the time being. Fortune favored him. The men soon fell to quarreling. One





struck the other, whereupon he threw the contents of his cup in his opponent's face, the liquor flying over the table, extinguishing the candle.

In a moment Arthur was up, had reached the door—and was gone! The stairs were directly in front of him. Running down rapidly, but noiselessly, he was out in the street.

It was very dark, but he feared nothing just then but being recaptured by his dreaded persecutors. He ran as fast as he could. After going what seemed to him a very long distance, he came to a wharf.

The poor little forlorn, sick child, for he was indeed very ill, crouched behind a big pile of lumber. He must have remained there several hours, sleeping some, but most of the time straining every nerve in fear of those men.

Toward morning, from exhaustion, he slept more soundly. Upon awakening, he found the sun had risen, and was shining full upon him. He was quite hidden from observation by the lumber, but could hear the rumbling of vehicles, and the voices of many people passing near. At first he was too timid to move, but finally found courage to peep from his hiding-place.

He saw a wharf, extending far out into the water. A large steamer was lying close by. The wagons he had heard were carrying freight to her. He could see the people bustling about, making preparations for their voyage.


It was an Australian steamer. In half an hour it was to leave the dock. Certainly Arthur knew nothing of her destination, but wished himself on board that he might be out of danger. Finally he summoned courage to follow some of the passengers, as they passed on to the steamer. No one stopped him. Soon he stood on deck of the good ship *Alger*. A little later she started on her long voyage, bearing with her our little hero.

CHAPTER IV

Arthur was very weary, and sank into the nearest seat. Many people were on deck, but so busily engaged with their own affairs that none for a time noticed the condition of the boy. Presently a lady and gentleman were walking up and down the deck. The lady was quick to notice distress of any kind, and had several times glanced curiously at Arthur.

“I wish you would speak to that child,





dear," she said to her husband. "I think he must be sick or something; just look how he hangs his head."

The gentleman raised Arthur's drooping head. Arthur was frightened at being addressed by any one. Sick as he was, he attempted to rise and move away. But this time he was so very weak that he found it quite impossible to move. He looked appealingly at the lady and gentleman, and began to cry.

Mrs. Henderson sat down beside him. Putting her arms around the child, she tried to soothe him. When he grew more quiet, Mr. Henderson asked him:

"My little man, to whom do you belong? Where are your friends? I will find them for you," thinking, of course, they must be on the steamer.

Arthur, with many sobs, said he had no friends, repeating the story he still believed to be the true one: his parents were dead, his name was Charley Maynard, he had been taken by a circus man, cruelly treated, and had run away. The pitiful tale ended, he begged them not to let those men find him again.

They fully believed this story, and only asked themselves what was now best to be done. They saw that he was very ill, as he almost immediately sank again


into the stupor from which they had aroused him. Mr. Henderson, telling his wife to remain with the boy, went at once to consult the officers of the steamer. He soon returned with the captain, to whom they repeated the story. The captain said it was a pitiful tale, but he could not say how far it was true. The boy might be a little thief, trying to escape from the police.

"I am sure," said Mrs. Henderson, "that what he tells of himself is true. Just look at his innocent, pretty face. You did not see his eyes, or I am satisfied you would never think evil of the poor child. He now is certainly in need of most tender care. If you will assign to us a stateroom for him ——," here she glanced at her husband for approval.

"We will hold ourselves responsible for all expenses incurred," added Mr. Henderson.

The boy was soon undressed, bathed, and placed in a comfortable berth. He was found to be in a high fever. Very soon he became delirious, raving constantly of those men. The doctor gave it as his opinion that he was suffering from a terrible fright, and surmised some strong narcotic had been administered.





Mr. and Mrs. Henderson undertook the entire care of the boy, Mrs. Henderson and her maid, Hannah, nursing him by night and day. Hannah had undressed Arthur, and when she was alone with her mistress, she said:

“Didn’t you say, ma’am, how as he said he was a circus boy? I think as it’s true then. Just look ’ee here. It’s surely a circus jacket.”

She held up for Mrs. Henderson’s inspection the little spangled jacket that Lillian had made for her brother. It had been worn by him under his rough coat. Mrs. Henderson took it to her husband, and both believed this was indeed proof of the boy’s statement.

After many days and nights of suffering and weariness, Arthur was pronounced out of danger, his strength returning slowly. At last the physician thought it quite safe for him to be carried out on deck. This was a great event; Mr. Henderson would allow no one but himself to carry the little invalid.


The child indeed made a pretty picture, as he lay in the hammock that had been swung for him. His hair had grown long, was wavy and of a golden color; his skin was soft, like a baby’s;

in his cheeks was a faint, delicate glow. His large brown eyes gazed at one with a gentle, wistful expression, that never had been seen in the eyes of Arthur Eldridge.

Hannah made the "pretty dear," as she called him, some clothing out of such things as Mrs. Henderson happened to have with her. A favorite velvet cloak was sacrificed for this purpose. The boy certainly looked a little prince in this costume, with its wide collar and cuffs of rich lace. Had Arthur been himself, he would most certainly have disdained this "frumpery," with which he was adorned; probably have declared it only fit for girls. For several months it had been his ambition to wear long pants and stand-up collars—Frank had 'em.

Every one on the steamer was greatly interested in the little stranger. The children at first felt some awe of him, but finding him always so sweet and gentle, they soon began to talk to him freely, begging him to join in their plays. Arthur was not strong enough to play very much, liking best to sit in his steamer chair, or lie in his hammock having Mary Temple, a little girl of whom he had grown very fond, sit and talk to him.





She told him about her home in England, and said she was going to see her father in Australia. She told Arthur her mother had died many years before when she was a little baby.


“Your mother is dead, and your father too, poor Charley!” Mary looked pityingly at her young friend. She had heard his story discussed by the people on the steamer.

“Yes, Mary,” answered the boy reluctantly. “My father and mother are dead. I was taken by a cruel circus man,”—repeating the statement he always made.

This seemed to be a kind of a formula with him. Mrs. Henderson was standing near, and hoped he would speak more fully while talking to Mary, but on looking at him and seeing the far-away expression that always shadowed his face at the slightest mention of his former life, she hastened to interrupt their conversation.

Several people on the steamer offered to provide for the boy, who had made his appearance so mysteriously among them. But Mr. and Mrs. Henderson announced their intention of adopting the little waif as their son.

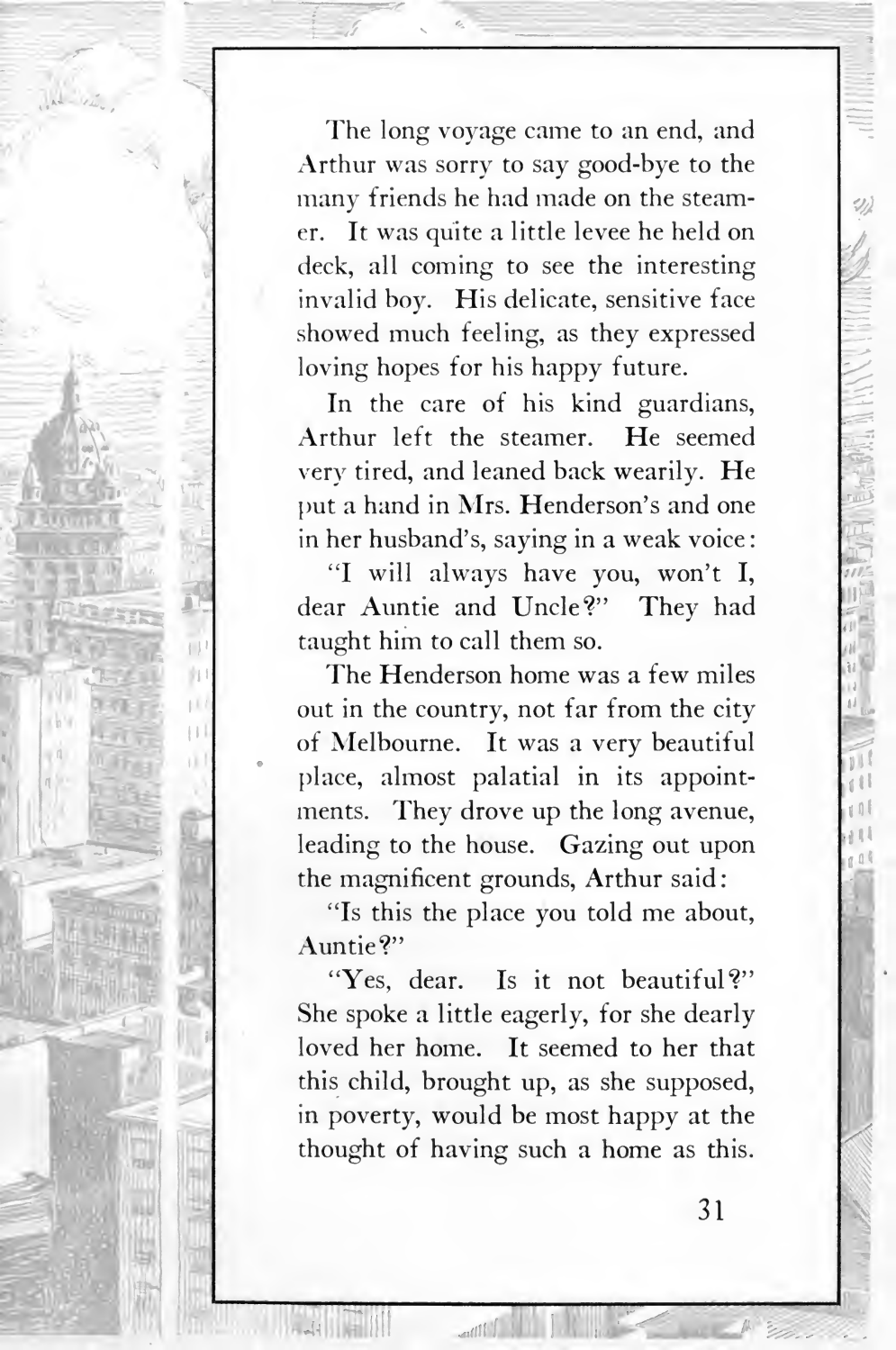
They wished very much to know



something more about him, and wondered that he said so little of his life before his appearance on the steamer. Of his parents, excepting to say they were dead, he never spoke at all. At the slightest mention of them, the same puzzled expression would come into his face that they had noticed from the first.

He shrank pitifully from speaking of the time he was with those cruel men, but that he had not forgotten was quite certain, for many times he would wake screaming from his sleep. He would cling to Hannah, who slept near him, and entreat her not to let them take him away.

The doctor thought that with the tender care he would now receive, this would gradually pass away. He said that he had been watching him closely, had come to the conclusion that his memory was impaired. He ventured to say that he knew nothing about himself beyond the mere statement he made. He thought as his health returned, his memory would improve, and he would be able to give a satisfactory account of himself. In the meantime, he advised that no questions should be asked him on the subject.



The long voyage came to an end, and Arthur was sorry to say good-bye to the many friends he had made on the steamer. It was quite a little levee he held on deck, all coming to see the interesting invalid boy. His delicate, sensitive face showed much feeling, as they expressed loving hopes for his happy future.

In the care of his kind guardians, Arthur left the steamer. He seemed very tired, and leaned back wearily. He put a hand in Mrs. Henderson's and one in her husband's, saying in a weak voice:

"I will always have you, won't I, dear Auntie and Uncle?" They had taught him to call them so.

The Henderson home was a few miles out in the country, not far from the city of Melbourne. It was a very beautiful place, almost palatial in its appointments. They drove up the long avenue, leading to the house. Gazing out upon the magnificent grounds, Arthur said:

"Is this the place you told me about, Auntie?"

"Yes, dear. Is it not beautiful?" She spoke a little eagerly, for she dearly loved her home. It seemed to her that this child, brought up, as she supposed, in poverty, would be most happy at the thought of having such a home as this.

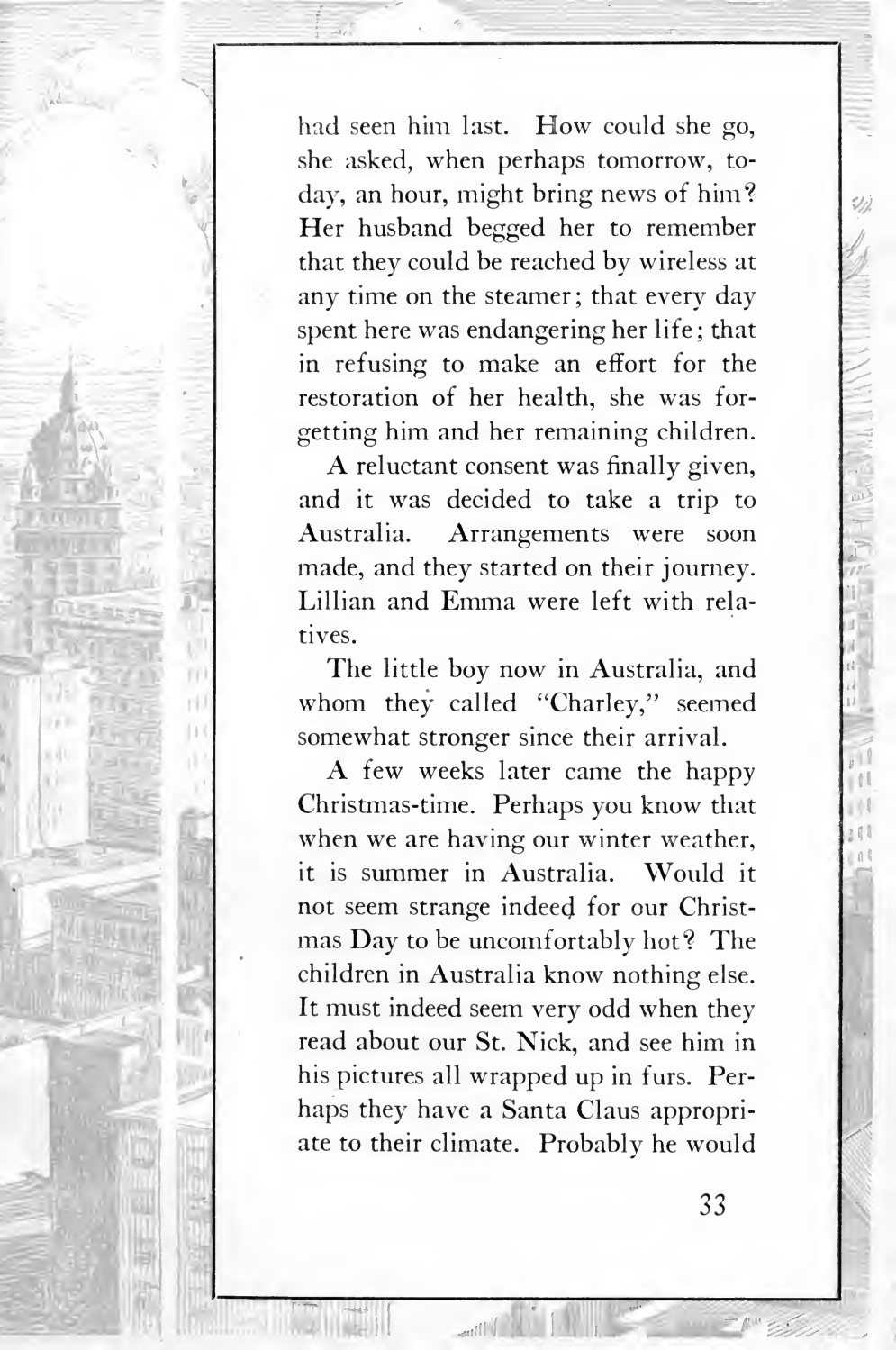
She was a little disappointed when he answered:

“It’s very nice,” but without a tinge of enthusiasm, and rather a touch of sadness in his voice. As he looked at her, there was in his eyes that far-away, pathetic expression that she could not endure to see there.

CHAPTER V

Mr. Eldridge, Arthur’s father, arrived in San Francisco in the middle of the night, and found that the police were doing all in their power to trace the lost boy. Everything that love and money could do was done to find him. But not the faintest hope was brought to the bereaved family. The poor mother, it seemed, would surely sink under her heavy grief. The father, though stronger, turned from a happy, genial man, to one unutterably sad.

The health of Mrs. Eldridge became so alarming that the doctor declared it was necessary for her to be removed from the scene of her sorrow. He advised taking a long sea voyage. For a time the poor mother utterly refused to go, saying she could not relinquish the hope that her darling would be found here where she



had seen him last. How could she go, she asked, when perhaps tomorrow, today, an hour, might bring news of him? Her husband begged her to remember that they could be reached by wireless at any time on the steamer; that every day spent here was endangering her life; that in refusing to make an effort for the restoration of her health, she was forgetting him and her remaining children.

A reluctant consent was finally given, and it was decided to take a trip to Australia. Arrangements were soon made, and they started on their journey. Lillian and Emma were left with relatives.

The little boy now in Australia, and whom they called "Charley," seemed somewhat stronger since their arrival.

A few weeks later came the happy Christmas-time. Perhaps you know that when we are having our winter weather, it is summer in Australia. Would it not seem strange indeed for our Christmas Day to be uncomfortably hot? The children in Australia know nothing else. It must indeed seem very odd when they read about our St. Nick, and see him in his pictures all wrapped up in furs. Perhaps they have a Santa Claus appropriate to their climate. Probably he would

wear a Panama hat and a linen suit. But even so, just think how our jolly old Santa would groan and perspire under his load of good things, for surely they never could have the heart to make him thin.


Arthur was awake rather early on Christmas morning, and lay listening to the twittering of the birds outside of his window. Mrs. Henderson came softly to his bedside:

“Are you awake, dear? I will call Hannah,” for she still attended Arthur. “You must hurry now and get dressed. It is Christmas morning, you know, dear.”

After breakfast they took Arthur to a large room, the windows of which were closely draped, so as to exclude all daylight. At one end was a brilliantly lighted Christmas-tree, one dazzling mass of light and color. Hovering over the tree were pure white doves. They hung there with outspread wings, some high, some low, some touching its glistening branches, but so cunningly suspended, and looking so much alive, poised there in the air, that Arthur and the children were for the moment deceived.

Gathered around the tree was a party of little folk, both boys and girls. They





were the children of poor people. It was the custom of Mr. and Mrs. Henderson to gather together a number of these children every year, and to make for them a happy Christmas-time. There was always a tree, but never before had they seen such a beautiful one as this.

As they entered the room, the tones of a piano were heard, and children's voices burst into a glad Christmas carol. When the song was finished, Arthur clapped his hands, showing more enthusiasm than was usual with him.

Gifts were distributed to the young guests, until their arms were fairly loaded with them. Candy and other sweetmeats were abundantly provided.

Once more the children gathered about the tree, and another carol was sung. At a whispered word from Mrs. Henderson, each child came forward and timidly shook hands with Arthur. He smiled, and wished them a very merry Christmas.

After the children had gone, Mr. Henderson turned to Arthur: "Now we will give our own boy his gifts."

Package after package was presented to him: a railroad train that went by steam; wagons, boats, horses, knives, paint-boxes, picture games, books; in

fact everything that could be thought of to please a boy's heart was there.

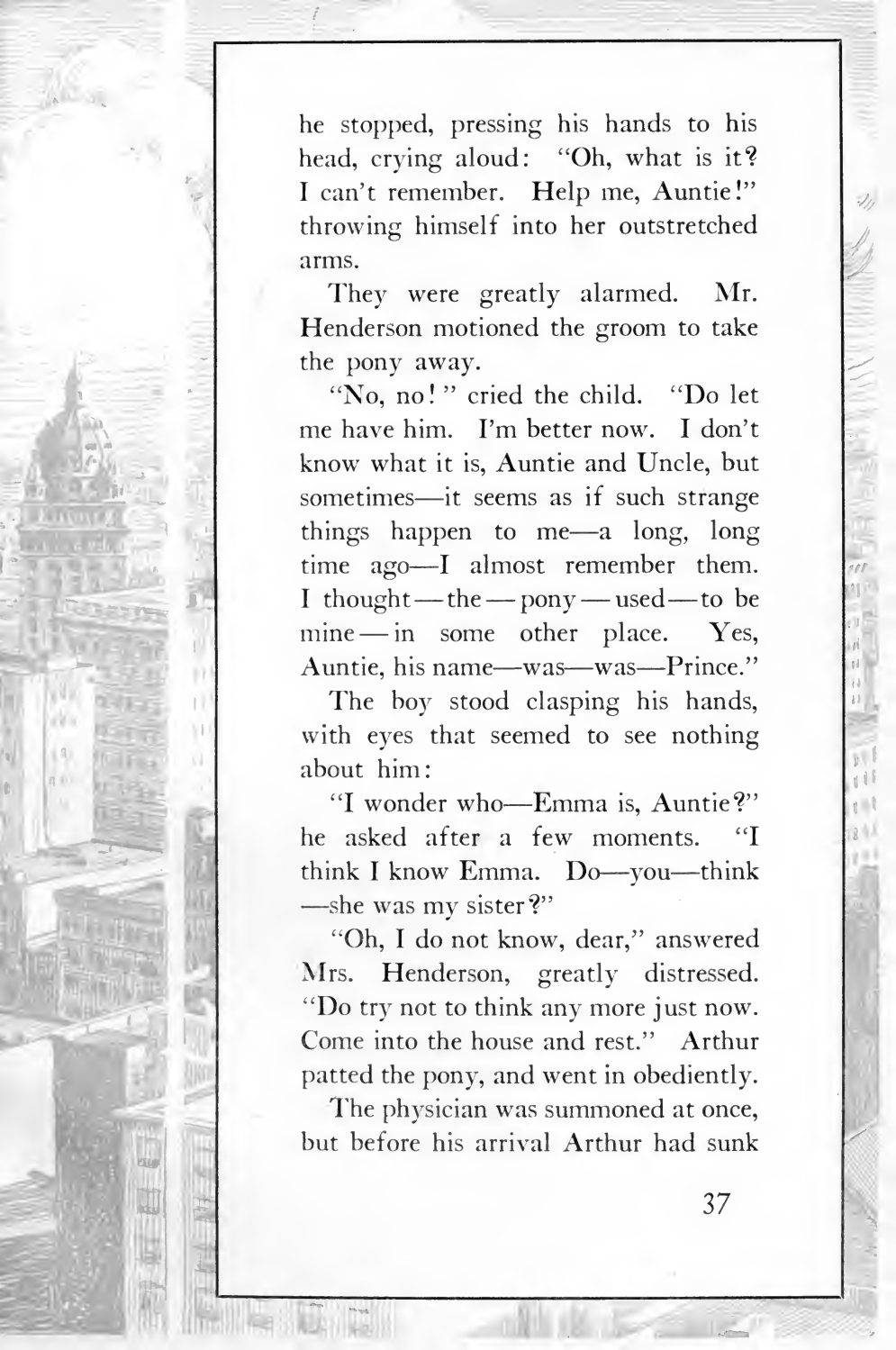
After he had examined his toys, they told him that Santa Claus had left him something outside that they thought he would like best of all. Lifting the curtains he saw standing on the graveled walk, the sweetest little turnout that ever was seen—a diminutive low carriage, drawn by two of the prettiest little ponies in all the world. Arthur clapped his hands. Nothing had seemed to arouse him like this.

They told him that he was to have a pony to ride as soon as he was strong enough. He seemed so greatly pleased at this that it was not many days before it was sent for, his kind friends thinking it would please him to pet and make friends with the little animal.

In selecting the pony, Mr. Henderson had chosen a black one. This was the very color of the one that had been Arthur's in his home in California. As the groom led forward the pony, the boy acted very strangely. There came into his eyes an eagerness, the old far-away expression, so wistful, and this time more intense than it ever had been.

He went toward the pony, gazing fixedly at it. Before taking many steps





he stopped, pressing his hands to his head, crying aloud: "Oh, what is it? I can't remember. Help me, Auntie!" throwing himself into her outstretched arms.

They were greatly alarmed. Mr. Henderson motioned the groom to take the pony away.

"No, no!" cried the child. "Do let me have him. I'm better now. I don't know what it is, Auntie and Uncle, but sometimes—it seems as if such strange things happen to me—a long, long time ago—I almost remember them. I thought—the —pony—used—to be mine—in some other place. Yes, Auntie, his name—was—was—Prince."

The boy stood clasping his hands, with eyes that seemed to see nothing about him:

"I wonder who—Emma is, Auntie?" he asked after a few moments. "I think I know Emma. Do—you—think—she was my sister?"

"Oh, I do not know, dear," answered Mrs. Henderson, greatly distressed. "Do try not to think any more just now. Come into the house and rest." Arthur patted the pony, and went in obediently.

The physician was summoned at once, but before his arrival Arthur had sunk

into a deep sleep. On being informed of what had occurred, he said that he thought, instead of being alarmed, they might feel satisfaction in this effort of his memory to assert itself. He considered it a certain indication of returning health. He hoped that within a short time he would be able to recall his entire past life. On no account must he be disturbed, but allowed to sleep as long as he would.

Arthur slept eight hours, and when he awoke he seemed much brighter, his eyes were clearer, and his skin of a more natural color.


“Do you know, Auntie, there was such a pretty lady in my dreams just now. Don’t you think—perhaps—she was—my mama? She put out her arms to me, and I said, ‘Mama!’ but then I woke up,” and he sighed.

Mrs. Henderson talked to him of other things. Gradually the memories seemed to fade away. The pony proved a great delight to Arthur, and every day he fed and petted him; he called him “Prince.”

My young readers, I would like to take you with me on a trip to the big Australian steamer that is away out on the deep ocean. How are we to reach

Read





this good ship *Alger*, for it is the very one that brought Arthur to his new home, a few months before. We are certainly not rich enough to charter a steamer, and there is none going out just now that could by any possibility meet her. There is no bridge. I will tell you what we will do. We will sail "On the wings of imagination!" Then we would see a lady sitting on the deck, almost in the very spot, for it was a sheltered one, where Arthur had been accustomed to sit nearly every day,—a pale, sad-looking lady; when she gazes far away over the waters, there is an expression in her eyes which reminds one of the little invalid boy. This resemblance must have been very striking just then, for, as she took a shawl from the stewardess, she was surprised to see her start back, as if she had received a shock.


"Oh, ma'am! You must excuse me. You do look so like the little boy!"

"What little boy?" Mrs. Eldridge was full of interest at once. The stewardess told her all she knew of the boy that had been found on this very steamer a few months before. Mrs. Eldridge grew so excited that she scarcely could speak, while the stewardess hurried away for the husband.



She was surprised
to see her start back,
as if she had
received a shock.





Mr. Eldridge listened eagerly to the story, but begged his wife to moderate her hopes until all possible inquiries could be made. He at once went for the captain, bringing him to his wife's stateroom, where she had retired, almost overcome with emotion.

He corroborated in every particular the story told by the stewardess, but said he feared there could be no hope that the boy was their lost son. The child knew perfectly well who he was; had said from the first that his name was "Charley Maylard," that his father and mother were dead.

There was indeed not much in this story to bring hope to the sorrowing parents. Mr. Eldridge gently explained this to his wife, but she would answer: "I cannot help hoping. Something tells me I may."

The steamer arrived safely at her destination. The last weeks had seemed almost intolerable to the parents. As soon as they could land, with feverish eagerness Mrs. Eldridge begged her husband not to lose a moment in his search for the boy of whom they had heard on the steamer.

It was not difficult to find Mr. and Mrs. Henderson. Mr. Eldridge ascer-


tained that they still had the boy under their care:

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning when they arrived at the Henderson's residence. As they drove up the long avenue, leading to the house, Mrs. Eldridge looked about her, saying hopefully, "Our Arthur may have been playing under these very trees this morning."

They alighted and were admitted almost immediately. Mr. Eldridge sent in his card, begging an interview with Mr. and Mrs. Henderson on business concerning their adopted son.

They had not long to wait, and were cordially received. Mr. Eldridge at once entered upon the subject of their errand. He spoke of their loss, and told how they had undertaken this trip to Australia for the benefit of his wife's health. He said they had come over on the ship *Alger*, and had heard the strange story of the boy. Here his wife could no longer restrain herself, crying eagerly:

"Oh, let us see him! Please, please don't wait! My heart is breaking!" The tears streamed down the poor mother's face. Mrs. Henderson, too, was crying.



“You shall see him, my dear,” answered Mrs. Henderson. “He is out driving now, but will not be gone long. You shall see him. If he proves to be your lost one, as dear as he is to us, and he seems like our very own, we will gladly restore him to you.”

While they awaited Arthur’s coming, Mr. Henderson told them every particular as to the finding of the boy. He explained his present condition, saying that they believed his health was improving, but that, as yet, he certainly had not entirely recovered his memory. They felt fully convinced that the account he gave of himself was a true one. They told how this belief had been confirmed by his having had on, when found, a little circus jacket. Mrs. Henderson proposed that they should examine the clothing worn by him at the time of his coming.

Bancroft Library

The package was sent for. The underclothing was of such good quality that it had always been a source of surprise to Mrs. Henderson, believing as she did that the boy came of very poor people. Mrs. Eldridge took them in her hands, examining them tenderly, but shook her head: “I do not know. I cannot say that these were Arthur’s.”

Mrs. Henderson unfolded the small spangled jacket. At sight of this, the mother seized it quickly.

"Oh, I believe this was Arthur's! I remember it now, although I have never thought of it since his disappearance."

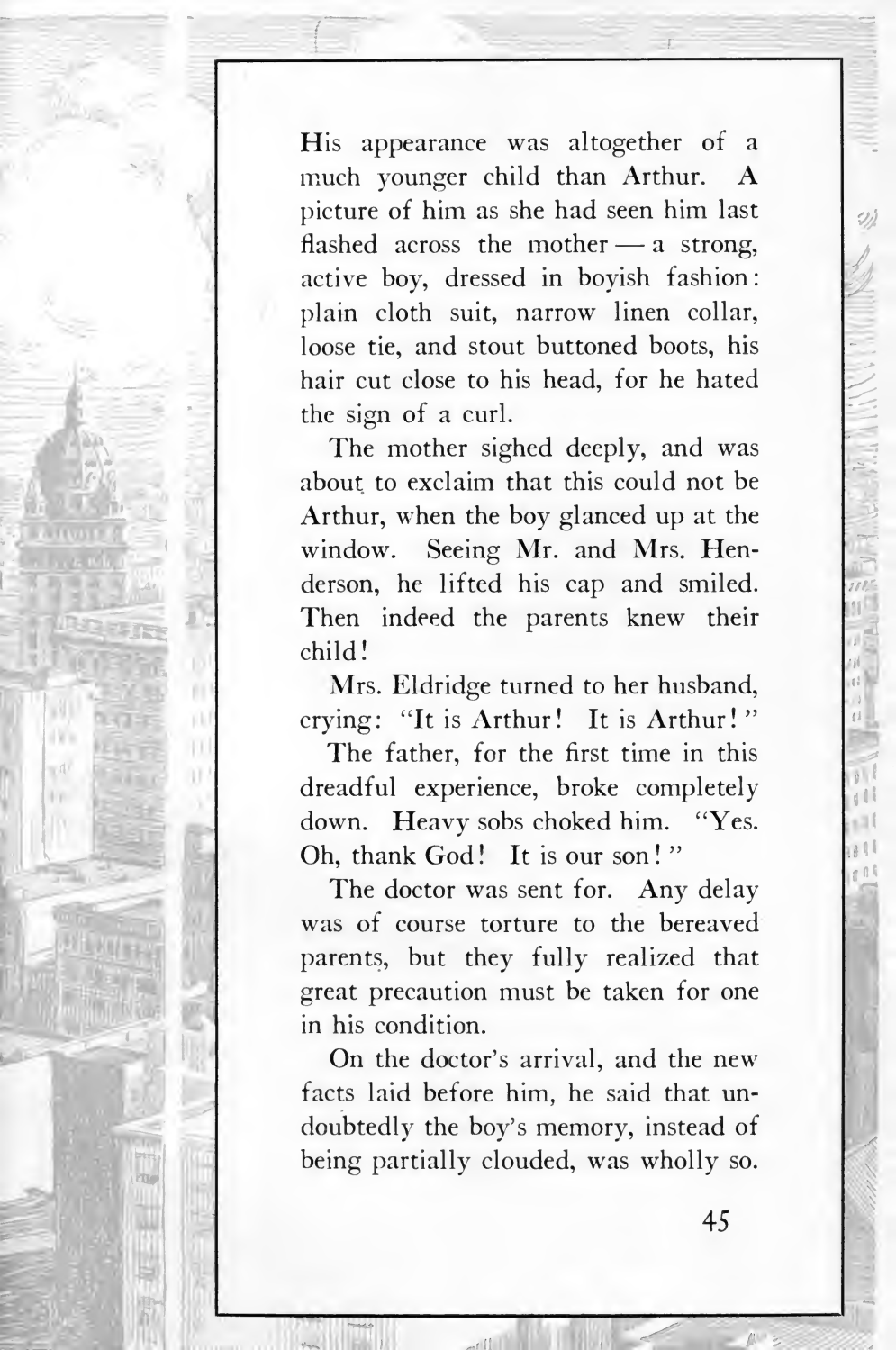
As well as she could, in her great excitement, she explained how Lillian had made her brother a circus jacket and cap. The cap was not there, but she believed this was the jacket.

Mrs. Henderson heard the sound of wheels; stepping to the window: "The child is here," she said. "Will you look at him from the window?"

Mr. Eldridge passed his arm about his wife, gently drawing her forward. Mr. and Mrs. Henderson stood, scarcely breathing. They fully realized the grief it would be to them if the boy should be claimed. Yet these generous souls prayed that it might be so.

The parents, as they stood looking out of the window, saw a little low carriage drawn by two white ponies. A frail-looking little boy had just alighted. He wore long yellow curls hanging on his shoulders. His hair was banged in front, English fashion. He wore a dark, wine-colored suit, with deep collar and cuffs of lace, a Scotch cap on his head.





His appearance was altogether of a much younger child than Arthur. A picture of him as she had seen him last flashed across the mother — a strong, active boy, dressed in boyish fashion: plain cloth suit, narrow linen collar, loose tie, and stout buttoned boots, his hair cut close to his head, for he hated the sign of a curl.


The mother sighed deeply, and was about to exclaim that this could not be Arthur, when the boy glanced up at the window. Seeing Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, he lifted his cap and smiled. Then indeed the parents knew their child!

Mrs. Eldridge turned to her husband, crying: "It is Arthur! It is Arthur!"

The father, for the first time in this dreadful experience, broke completely down. Heavy sobs choked him. "Yes. Oh, thank God! It is our son!"

The doctor was sent for. Any delay was of course torture to the bereaved parents, but they fully realized that great precaution must be taken for one in his condition.

On the doctor's arrival, and the new facts laid before him, he said that undoubtedly the boy's memory, instead of being partially clouded, was wholly so.




He had suspected something of this, almost from the first time he had seen him, but had hesitated to say so, as the boy was always so positive in his account of himself. His health had very much improved, and possibly, the doctor thought, he might entirely recover his memory at sight of his parents. At all events, in his opinion, there would be little risk in trying this, and at once. He proposed that Mrs. Henderson should prepare him somewhat by telling him the story of his own life.

Arthur was sent for. The parents were concealed by some draperies, but were near enough to hear all that passed.

On entering the room Arthur found Mrs. Henderson alone. She drew him to her, passing her arms lovingly about him.

“Well, dear, have you had a pleasant ride this morning?”

Arthur was enthusiastic, as he told her that he was sure he had the prettiest ponies in all the world. He seemed a little tired, leaning his head affectionately against her. She passed her hand caressingly over his head. As she pressed her lips to his forehead, there was sorrow in her heart, tears in her eyes. But at once she took herself to task for



what she deemed her selfishness. She thought of all the parents had suffered, and of their present happiness, and her heart was filled with gladness and gratitude that the child had been restored through her husband and herself.

Behind the curtains, the father restrained the mother, fearing that in her eagerness she would be unable to wait to clasp her boy in her arms.

“I want to tell you a story, dear,” began Mrs. Henderson. “Many miles away from here, near a city called—San Francisco——” Here she paused, hoping he would recognize the name. He lifted his head, looked at her with something of the old puzzled expression:


“Auntie, where’ve I heard that name?” I don’t think I’ll like that story, Auntie.”

He looked up in her face appealingly, whispering, “I think that’s where the bad circus man kept me.”

“Never mind that, dear. You are not afraid, now that you have us to take care of you. I want to tell you about a little boy who lived there. One day his mother and sisters went to the city, leaving him in charge of his old nurse. After awhile she missed him, and—



A lovely lady
coming toward him
with
outstretched arms



Ar—thur——” speaking the name slowly and distinctly. The boy jumped to his feet, crying excitedly:

“Oh, wait, Auntie! Let me think! Did you say his name was—Arthur? Wait, Auntie,—Arthur—Arthur—Arthur—El—dridge. Oh, Auntie, who was Arthur Eldridge?”

Mrs. Henderson saw the curtains tremble, and knew that not long could the parents restrain themselves.

“Try to think, dear. Did you ever know Arthur Eldridge? And did he have two sisters, named——”

Arthur broke in with, “Emma and Lillian! Wait, Auntie. I’ll think some more in a minute.”

She gently turned him around, that he might see what she saw—a lovely lady coming toward him with outstretched arms, and eyes looking unutterable love and longing.

Arthur gazed a moment, shrinking a little, the puzzled expression coming into his face. Another moment, and it was gone! His face lit up, his mother knew she was recognized.

He ran to her, crying: “Mama! Mama! *Where* have you been all this time?”

As Mrs. Henderson slipped quietly

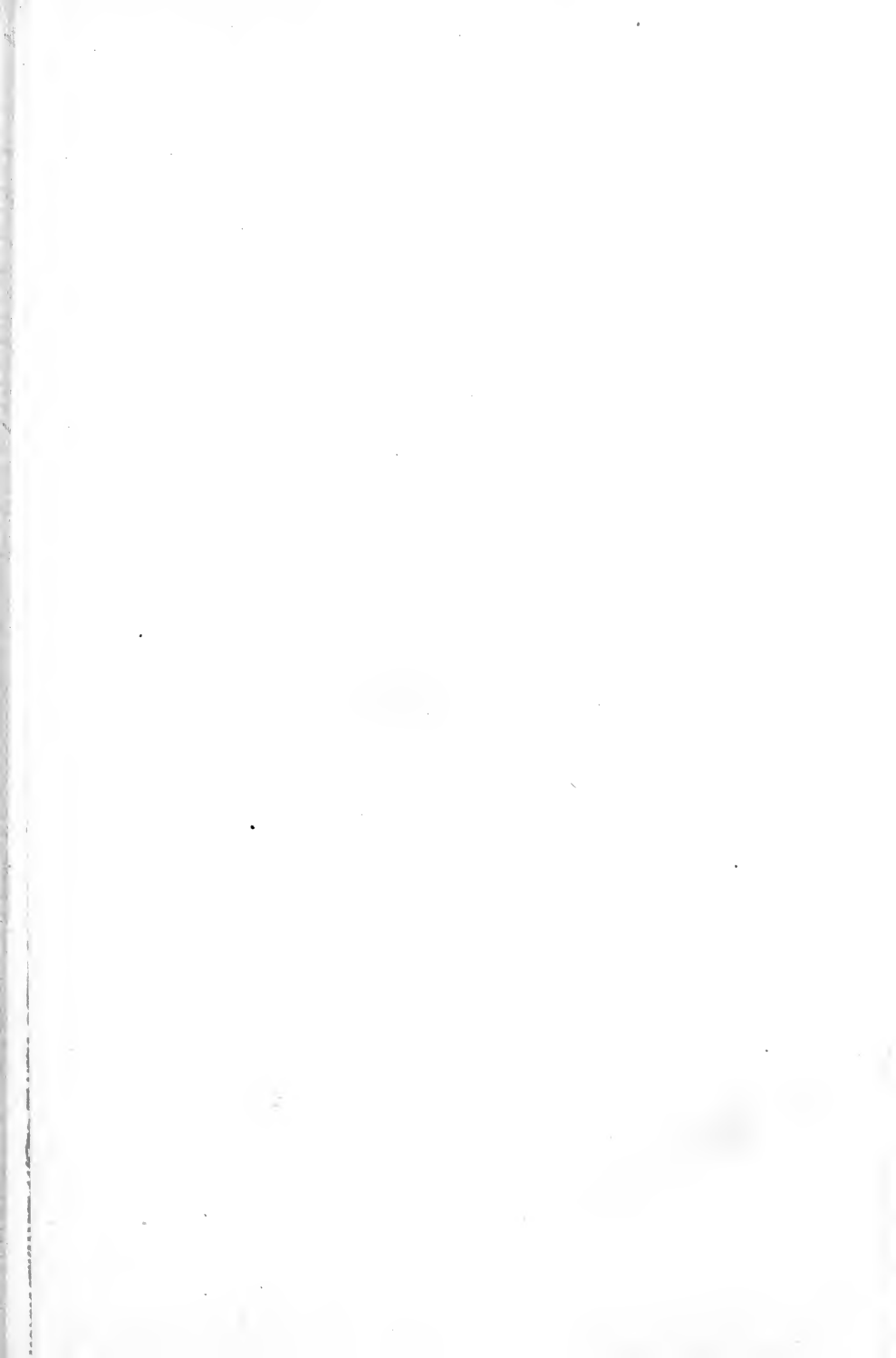
away, she heard the child exclaim:
“Papa, why didn’t you come and take
me away from that bad man?”

She knew he had found both father
and mother.

[THE END.]







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